

NEW YORK STATE CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE, INC.

320 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217 Phone (516) 406-0225 • Fax (516) 710-7832 www.nyschildrensalliance.org

In 2012, more than 80,000 children in New York State were victims of child maltreatment. Our children are our most precious and vulnerable population and now, more than ever, they need your help.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA), I respectfully request that state funding for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) be restored to 2007 levels by the addition of \$2 million to the state budget.

From 2007 to 2011 State funding for CAC's was reduced by \$2 million. Last year you and your colleagues recognized the severity of these cuts and voted to restore \$750,000 of that funding which we greatly appreciated. This has helped our centers to more adquaetely respond to cases of child abuse in our counties. Unfortunately, the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for State Fiscal Year 2013-2014 does not include this critical funding. We need your help. While we understand the State still faces fiscal challenges, it is my job today to help you understand the importance of restoring this much needed funding.

Child Advocacy Centers work to reduce the trauma children who are victims of abuse suffer following a disclosure of abuse or neglect, while ensuring their offenders are held accountable. Using a multidisciplinary team approach, law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, medical providers, therapists and child advocates work together to collect evidence, investigate allegations, and provide treatment to child victims and their families. We work to build strong cases so children are not forced to testify in court in front of their abusers, who all too often are close family members or someone they know and trust.

CAC's are effective. Studies show that children involved with a CAC receive better treatment. Sixty-six percent of CAC cases included a referral for mental health services verses only 21% in a comparison community. Forty-eight percent of children in a CAC community receive a medical evaluation verses only 21% in a non-CAC community. In addition, the multi-disciplinary approach supports collaboration among agencies. In a CAC community, law enforcement investigators were involved in 81% of Child Protective Service investigations of sexual abuse compared to only 52% of cases in comparison communities.

In October 2006, the New York State Legislature recognized Child Advocacy Centers as a key component of the State's response to child abuse, and codified the use of CACs as best practice for investigating, evaluating and treating child abuse cases.

Since 2007 the number of abuse and neglect investigations handled by New York's 40 CACs has grown from 10,763 in 2007 to 18,576 in 2012. This represents a 73 percent increase in volume.

CACs are doing their best to respond to this growing need despite the loss of state resources. We fear that without additional funding, our Centers will not be able to adequately investigate the cases of child abuse and provide care and safety to the victims and their families.



According to the February 2012 publication from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Child maltreatment is a serious and prevalent public health problem". Their study, The Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment in the United States and Implications for Prevention, found the lifetime cost for each victim of non-fatal child maltreatment, was \$210,012. The financial costs for victims, our state and local government are substantial.

We know, however, that Child Advocacy Centers are cost effective. In a study conducted by the University of New Hampshire, CAC investigations resulted in a cost saving to the community of an average of \$1,000 per child. They found that on a per-case basis, traditional investigations are 36% more expensive than CAC investigations. The average per-case cost of a CAC investigation is \$2,902.00 compared to \$3,949.00 for a non-CAC investigation.

The research tells us that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will experience some type of sexual abuse before age 18. When you break that down, that means in a classroom of 20 children an average of 5 may be exposed to sexual abuse.

We also know that as a result of abuse 1 to 3 of these children may suffer serious symptoms of Post-traumatic stress disorder. It's difficult to think children are impacted by abuse. We as a society think of our children as resilient, going to school, engaging in life, doing what they are supposed to be doing, happy and carefree.

That is often not the case. The impact of abuse on children is well documented. It affects attendance, grades, and graduation rates. More importantly without proper interventions and support abuse can affect their physical and emotional health and well-being. The good news is with effective intervention and support children can and do heal from their abuse and go on to live happy healthy lives.

We have all expressed our collective disgust about Penn State, the Sandusky Trial, the secret files kept by the Boy Scouts, Horace Mann, and on and on. The time has come to do something about the prevalence of child sexual abuse. We must work together to stop these horrific crimes from happening once and for all. And when we are unable to prevent abuse from happening, it is imperative that we support a system that responds in a manner that helps prevent any further negative consequences.

From the work that you and the Governor have done in the past year, it is apparent that protection of the vulnerable from abuse has been a top priority. The Governor has established the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. You and the Governor worked to expand the NYS DNA databank and the pass Domestic Violence Omnibus Act, which strengthened a number of laws against domestic violence. The Governor continues to show his commitment to the most vulnerable in our society by the initiatives he has put forth in this year's State of the State address, most particularly the Women's Equality Act which covers a broad spectrum of issues that impact children as well as women: human trafficking (removing the element of "coercion" in cases involving minors) and domestic violence (removing obstacles to obtaining orders of protection and permitting testifying by video-conferencing in certain proceedings).

The goal of New York State Children's Alliance is to provide every child in New York State with access to an accredited Child Advocacy Center. From Niagara Falls to Long Island, regardless of how large or small their community, how urban or rural, how wealthy or impoverished, every child deserves the best possible system response to abuse. We respectfully submit that a restoration of \$2 million in state aid would go a long way to furthering this objective. We all must keep in mind that while children may only represent 30 percent of our current population, they represent 100 percent of our future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Hill, NYSCA Chair

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on behalf of the NYSCA Board of Directors and NYSCA Membership



Child Advocacy Center Summary

Karen Hill

Chair Western Region

Stacy Osborn Vice Chair Capital Region

Renee Smith

Mohawk Valley Region Treasurer

Gena Diacomanolis Metropolitan Region Secretary

Maria Behler Ex Officio

Rhonda Stanford- Zahn Central Region

Christine Schoonmaker NYSCARCC

Danielle Weisberg Hudson Valley Region

Mary Whittier Finger Lakes Region

Jennifer Wormley
North Country Region

The mission of the New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA) is to promote the dedicated development and sustainability of multidisciplinary teams and child advocacy centers throughout New York State in order to better serve abused and neglected children and their families. It acts as the state chapter of the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

Every six minutes in our country a child is sexually abused. Every six minutes.

It seems there isn't a day that goes by that we don't hear about or read about child abuse in the news. Given the recent child sexual abuse allegations at Penn State and Syracuse University, there has been a national spotlight on a crime based in secrecy and shame that has been around for generations. It's time to take this as an opportunity to have people take the epidemic of child sexual abuse as seriously as they take breast cancer, AIDS, alcoholism and animal abuse. Child Advocacy Centers are a huge part of the solution.

Children are not and cannot be responsible for protecting themselves against sexual abuse; as adults we must accept responsibility for protecting and keeping children safe. In situations where it is not possible to protect a child from abuse it is imperative we respond in a manner that facilitates healing and gives them hope. At a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) we know that when a child is brave enough to disclose sexual abuse, it is important that we believe them, support them and do everything we can to protect them.

Throughout New York State when a report of child sexual abuse is made to the police or Child Protective Services, there is a partnership in place to end the abuse. Teams of experts work together to collect evidence, investigate, and provide treatment to support a successful outcome. We work tirelessly to build a case strong enough to spare a child from having to testify in the presence of their offender and to hold offenders accountable for their heinous crimes against children. We have 40 CACs in New York State; over 800 across the country.

Child Advocacy Centers are proven to be effective at reducing trauma for children. Studies show that children involved with a CAC receive more effective treatment. Sixty-six percent of CAC cases included a referral for mental health services verses only 21% in a comparison community. Forty-eight percent of children in a CAC community receive a medical evaluation verses only 21% in a non-CAC community. In addition, the multi-disciplinary approach supports collaboration among agencies. In a CAC community, law enforcement investigators were involved in 81% of Child Protective Service investigations of sexual abuse compared to only 52% of cases in comparison communities.

There is an accreditation process that CACs follow whereby they need to meet a set of 10 rigorous standards that ensure effective, efficient and consistent delivery of services. Once accredited, CACs then localize the standards to meet the unique needs of individual communities. The accreditation process ensures that CAC programs adhere to standards of quality service provision proven to be effective in helping children heal from the effects of abuse.

Child Advocacy Centers are seen as *the community resource* for not only investigation and treatment of child abuse but for awareness and prevention. Now more than ever we are called upon to educate our communities on the dynamics of sexual abuse so that the cycle can stop and people can be informed about what actions to take. CACs are the first step toward a child's recovery from abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a community problem which demands a community supported response. From Niagara Falls to Long Island, all abused children in New York State deserve to have access to the services of an accredited Child Advocacy Center.



NYS Child Advocacy Centers an overview of services to abused children

January, 2013

Karen Hill Chair

Western Region

Stacy Osborn
Vice Chair

Vice Chair Capital Region

Renee Smith

Mohawk Valley Region Treasurer

Gena Diacomanolis

Metropolitan Region Secretary

Marla Behler Ex Officio

Rhonda Stanford-Zahn Central Region

Christine Schoonmaker
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By the numbers

- One out of every 4 girls and one out of every 6 boys by age 18 will suffer some form of sexual abuse. www.darkness2light.org
- 90% of children are sexually abused by someone they know, love and trust.
- Less than one in 10 children disclose being sexually abused.
- Nationally, nearly five children die every day of abuse and neglect.
- In 2009, 272 children died in NYS of abuse and neglect.

Overview of Child Advocacy Centers (CACs)

- Child Advocacy Centers are organizations designed to provide a coordinated,
 multidisciplinary approach to investigations when children have been victims of sexual
 and/or physical abuse. CACs provide a safe, child-friendly environment to conduct
 forensic interviews, provide specialized medical examinations, mental health treatment
 and victim advocacy support to child victims and their non-offending family members.
 CACs provide the most efficient, effective and streamlined process that reduces trauma to
 families by not having children repeat their account of abuse over and over again, and
 reduces the number of medical examinations children receive.
- Partner agencies include: Child Protective Services, Law Enforcement, District Attorney's Office, County Law Department, medical providers, mental health and victim advocate professionals.
- CACs are comprised of a team of experts in their field so that the highest quality of service is provided by the very best professionals specifically trained in child abuse.
- In a study conducted by the University of New Hampshire, CACs were found to reduce trauma to children suffering from abuse that also resulted in a cost saving to the community of an average of \$1,000 per child.
- On a per-case basis, traditional investigations are 36% more expensive than CAC investigations. The average per-case cost of a CAC investigation is \$2,902.00 compared to \$3,949.00 for a non-CAC investigation.
- In October 2006, CACs were written into legislation as the best practice when investigating, evaluating and treating child abuse cases.
- Growth of CACs across the country and NYS
 - In 1985, the first CAC was established in Huntsville, Alabama
 - In 1995, there were 50 CACs across the country
 - In 2012, there were over 800 CACs across the country
 - In 2011, over 267,000 abused children were evaluated in CACs nationwide
 - There are 40 CACs in NYS, 32 of which are accredited by the National Children's Alliance www.nationalchildrensalliance.org



Financial Support

CACs are public/private partnerships that are constantly growing and providing services to more children each year. With this growth comes an increase in operational needs. As each CAC continues to grow and require more financial support, funding streams continue to decrease.

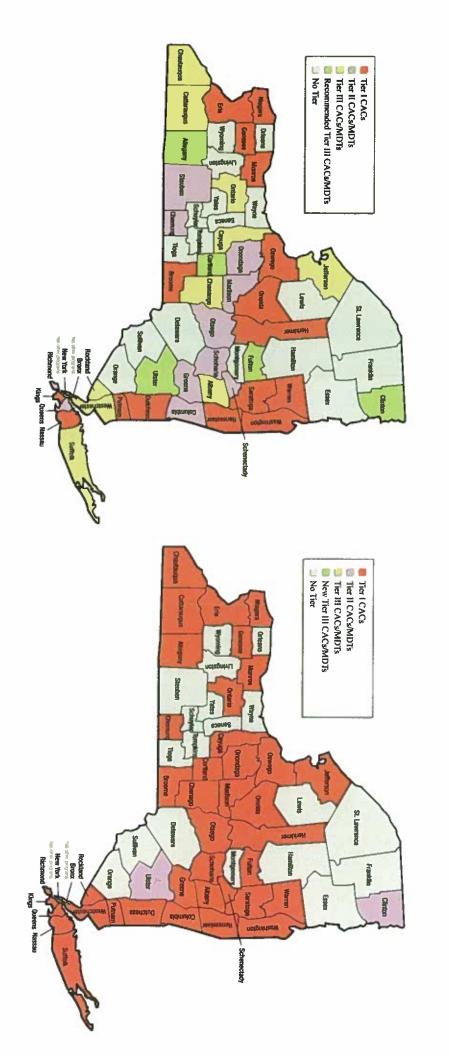
- 2007 total funding from OCFS was \$7,300,000, which supported 32 CACs.
- OCFS funding increased from 2006 to 2007, but has steadily decreased showing a total loss of \$2,000,000 over the course of 5 years.
- 2012 total funding from OCFS was slated to be \$5,229,900 to support 40 CACs; Two million dollars less than 2007, with 8 additional CACs to support.
- A legislative add restored \$750,000 of the \$2,000,000, bringing OCFS funding to \$5,979,900 in 2012.
- The number of children served by CACs in New York increased by 59% over five years. While the number of children served has steadily increased, state funding has steadily decreased.

Year	Level of State Funding	Number of Children Served
2007	\$7,808,000*	10,763
2008	\$7,108,000	11,643
2009	\$6,181,840	13,744
2010	\$5,811,000	15,851
2011	\$5,229,000	17,154
2012	\$5,979,900*	18,576**

*includes legislative add

NYS has more CACs than it did five years ago but less money to support their efforts and their growth. In addition, other communities across the state will not be afforded the opportunity to explore establishing a CAC due to the decrease in funding year after year.

^{**}projected total based upon first half of the year statistics



New York State Children's Alliance, inc.

The New York State Children's Alliance, Inc. (NYSCA) is a statewide membership organization of Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). NYSCA's mission is to promote the development, growth and continuity of CACs and MDTs throughout New York State in order to better serve abused and neglected children and their families.



NYSCA serves as the unified voice of New York's CACs and advocates for their best interest on a state and federal level. Services provided by NYSCA include: statewide and regional meetings, training, technical assistance, networking opportunities, legislative education and grant administration. In 2011, NYSCA became a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

What Is a CAC?

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) are child friendly locations in which allegations of abuse are responded to collaboratively by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). These centers are community based and tailored to fit the needs of the community in which they are located.

MDTs include members of law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental health providers, victim advocates and center staff. From the time of the initial report through the resolution of the case, the MDT will work together to conduct a thorough investigation, prosecute offenders and provide the necessary support services to child victims and their non-offending family members.



CHILDREN'S

CACs are based upon a national model designed to reduce the trauma experienced by child victims. Bud Cramer, then District Attorney of Madison County Alabama, created the concept of child advocacy centers in 1985 and founded the National Children's Alliance (NCA) in 1987. NCA sets standards for various aspects of the investigation of child abuse and the provision of services to victims and their non-offending family members.

Today, NCA is a national membership organization providing services to more than **800** children's advocacy centers across the United States, as well as numerous developing centers, multidisciplinary teams and child abuse professionals. NYSCA serves as the New York State Chapter of the National Children's Alliance.



Experience of Clients Served at Child Advocacy Centers

New York State Child Advocacy Centers are participating in a nationwide project, The Outcome Measurement System, in which clients of child advocacy centers are given an opportunity to evaluate their experience. At the time of the initial visit to the CAC, 97% of caretaker responses indicated that their child felt safe at the CAC and 94% said they would refer a friend in the same situation to the CAC. Two months after their initial visit, 91% felt that the CAC staff had done everything possible to assist their family. The following are comments from caregivers of children served at a CAC in New York.

"The staff made us very comfortable and handled this traumatic experience very delicately."

"Comfortable environment, well trained professionals"

"Support services were unexpected and a great comfort. I don't know how I would have done this without the CAC staff."

"I'm so grateful to know that something like the CAC is available."



Marian Wright Edelman, the great champion of children, once said, "If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much." Professionals in Child Advocacy Centers stand up for the children they serve every day in communities throughout New York State and throughout the country.

New York State Child Advocacy Centers

Albany

Albany County Children's Center

260 South Pearl Street Albany, NY 12202 Phone: 518 447 2525

Christine Zappone-Lenaghan, Coordinator

Allegany and Cattaraugus

Southern Tier Children's Advocacy Center

772 Main Street Olean, NY 14760 Phone: 716 372 8532 Karen Hill, Director Website: www.sthcs.org

Bronx

Butler Child Advocacy Center of the Children's

Hospital at Montefiore 3314 Steuben Avenue Bronx, NY 10467

Phone: 718 920 5833 or 718 618 8920 Lynn Hamberg, Acting Director Website: www.montefiore.org

Broome

Broome County Child Advocacy Center

377 Robinson Street Binghamton, NY 13904 Phone: 607 723 3200

Jean Rose-Klein, Coordinator Website: www.cvac.us

Cayuga

Child Advocacy Center of Cayuga County

17 East Genesee Street Auburn, NY 13021 Phone: 315 253 9795

Rhonda Stanford-Zahn, Director Website: www.cacofcayugacounty.org

Chautauqua

Child Advocacy Program of Chautauqua County

405 West Third Street Jamestown, NY 14701 Phone: 716 338 9844 Jana McDermott, Director

Chemung

Chemung County Child Advocacy Center

304 Hoffman Street Elmira, NY 14905 Phone: 607 737 8449

Kimberly Ripley, Coordinator Website: www.chemungcounty.com Chenango

Catholic Charities of Chenango County

3 O'Hara Drive Norwich, NY 13815 Phone: 607 334 8244

Mike Middaugh, CAC Supervisor

Clinton

Community Team Responding and Advocating for Kids (CTRAK)

46 Arizona Avenue Plattsburgh, NY 12901 Phone: 518 324 6959 Richelle Beach, Director

Columbia and Greene

Dr. Stephen & Suzanne Menkes

Child Advocacy Center

2A Milo Street Hudson, NY 12534 Phone: 518 697 3320

Denise Saunders, Coordinator

Cortland

Cortland County Child Advocacy Program

60 Central Avenue, Room B9

Cortland, NY 13045 Phone: 607 753 5087 Jamie Wheeler, Director

Dutchess

The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse

249 Hooker Avenue Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 Phone: 845 454 0595

Kathleen Murphy, Executive Director

Website: www.preventchildabusedutchess.org

Erie

Lee Gross Anthone Child Advocacy Center

556 Franklin Street Buffalo, NY 14202 Phone: 716 886 5437 Judith Olin, Director Website: www.catswny.org

Fulton

Child Advocacy Center of Fulton County

307-309 Meadow Street Johnstown, NY 12095 Phone: 518 736 2443

Karen Hasenfuss, Coordinator

Genesee

Justice for Children Center

108 Bank Street Batavia, NY 14020 Phone: 585 344 8576 Anne Bezon, Coordinator

Herkimer

Child Advocacy Center of Herkimer County

205 North Washington Street Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315 732 2159 ext 230 Kelly Conroy, Coordinator Website: www.ywcamv.org

Jefferson

Child Advocacy Program of Northern New York

120 Washington Street, Suite 406

Watertown, NY 13601 Phone: 315 788 8520

Elaina Marra, Executive Director

Website: www.vacjc.com

Kings

Jane Barker Brooklyn Child Advocacy Center

320 Schermerhorn Street Brooklyn, NY 11217 Phone: 718 330 5405

Gena Diacomanolis, Senior Director Website: www.safehorizon.org

Madison

Madison County Child Advocacy Center

6802 Buyea Road Canastota, NY 13032 Phone: 315 363 2816 Renee Smith, Coordinator

Monroe

Bivona Child Advocacy Center

275 Lake Avenue Rochester, NY 14608 Phone: 585 935 7803

Anna Potter, Program Manager Website: www.bivonacac.org

Nassau

Coalition Against Child Abuse and Neglect

15 Grumman Road West, Suite 900

Bethpage, NY 11714 Phone: 516 747 2966

Terray Gregoretti, Coordinator Website: www.ccanli.org

New York

Manhattan Child Advocacy Center

1753 Park Avenue, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10035 Phone: 646 695 6100

Frankie Alvarez, Senior Director Website: www.safehorizon.org

Niagara

Child Advocacy Center of Niagara

501 Tenth Street

Niagara Falls, NY 14302 Phone: 716 278 4543

Laura Kelemen, Executive Director Website: www.cacofniagara.org

Oneida

Oneida County Child Advocacy Center

930 York Street Utica, NY 13502 Tel 315 732 3990

Dean Obernesser, Chief Deputy Website: www.ocgov.net

Onondaga

McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Center

601 East Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13202 Phone: 315 701 2985

Christine Larkin, Interim Director

Ontario

Child Advocacy Program of the Finger Lakes

8 Banta Street, Suite 413 Phelps, NY 14532 Phone: 315 548 3232

Skye Peebles, Project Director

Oswego

Child Advocacy Center Foundation, Inc.

301 Beech Street Fulton, NY 13069 Phone: 315 592 4453 Karrie Damm, Director Website: www.oswegocac.org

Otsego

Otsego County Child Advocacy Center

140 County Highway 33W, Suite 2

Cooperstown, NY 13326 Phone: 607 547 1770 Stacy Osborn, Coordinator

Putnam

Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County

121 Main Street Brewster, NY 10509 Phone: 845 808 1400 Marla Behler, Coordinator

Queens

Queens Child Advocacy Center

112-25 Queens Boulevard Forest Hills, NY 11375 Phone: 718 575 1342

Naomi Barasch, Senior Director Website: www.safehorizon.org

Rensselaer

START Children's Center

76 Pawling Avenue Troy, NY 12180 Phone: 518 271 6001

Renee Roman, Executive Director Website: www.startchildrenscenter.com

Richmond

Staten Island Child Advocacy Center

130 Stuyvesant Place Staten Island, NY 10301 Phone: 718 556 4052

Frankie Alvarez, Senior Director Website: www.safehorizon.org

Rockland

Rockland County Special Victims Center

Child Advocacy Program 255 Lafayette Avenue Suffern, NY 10901 Phone: 845 821 5639

Det. Lt. Mary Murphy, Director

Saratoga

Harriet M. West Child Advocacy Center

359 Ballston Avenue Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 Phone: 518 587 8008 Jennifer Wormley, Director

Website: www.saratogacff.org

Schenectady

Schenectady County Multidisciplinary Team

106 Erie Boulevard Schenectady, NY 12305 Phone: 518 388 4615 Lynn Chabot, Coordinator

Schoharie

Child at Risk Response Team of Schoharie County

113 Park Place, Suite 1 Schoharie, NY 12157 Phone: 518 295 2021 Carol Lennon, Coordinator

Suffolk

Suffolk County Child Advocacy Center

80 Wheeler Road Central Islip, NY 11722 Phone: 631 439 0480

Andrea Ramos-Topper, Director

Ulster

Ulster County Department of Social Services

21 O'Neil Street Kingston, NY 12401 Phone: 845 334 5155 Lynn Carlson

Warren and Washington

Warren/Washington CARE Center

P.O. Box 659, 24 Dix Avenue Glens Falls, NY 12801

Phone: 518 792 2731

Mike Guglielmoni, Executive Director Website: www.wwcarecenter.org

Westchester

Children's Advocacy Center at WIHD

WIHD/Cedarwood Hall Valhalla, NY 10595 Phone: 914 493 5333

Danielle Weisberg, Director Website: www.wihd.org